

MONK, P. J. OLIVER, R. E. F. PEAL, Revd. Dr. W. SERLE, G. A. SMITH JR., S. A. H. STATHAM, K. V. THOMPSON and C. E. WHEELER.

Guests present were: Miss C. ASH, J. BEESLEY, Miss E. BUTTERWORTH, Dr. A. W. DIAMOND, Mrs. I. MCCULLOCH, Mrs. P. J. OLIVER, Mrs. E. PEAL, Mrs C. E. WHEELER and Miss M. ZUNZ.

Dr. A. W. Diamond spoke on "Birds of the Western Indian Ocean Islands". He showed slides of some birds and, more particularly, of important habitats on Madagascar, the Mascarene Islands, the Comoros, Aldabra and Seychelles. He explained the effects of the habitats of each island or group and the changes wrought in them in historic times upon its avifauna. The excellent address was followed by a lively discussion.

The seven hundred and forty-fourth Meeting of the Club was held in the Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, London, S.W.7 on Tuesday 13 December 1982 at 7 p.m. The attendance was 18 Members and 28 guests.

Members present were: D. R. CALDER (*Chairman*), K. F. BETTON, Mrs. DIANA BRADLEY, S. CRAMP, P. J. CONDER, R. A. N. CROUCHER, J. H. ELGOOD, D. J. FISHER, D. GRIFFIN, P. HOGG, J. KING, Dr. A. G. KNOX, Revd. G. K. MCCULLOCH, J. G. PARKER, R. E. F. PEAL, R. C. PRICE, S. A. H. STATHAM and M. P. WALTERS.

Guests present were: D. BRADLEY, Miss S. P. F. DIXON, A. FARRAR, Miss J. FENTON, T. M. GULLICK, D. HALE, Mr. and Mrs. K. J. HALL, H. HAWKER, M. HENRY, J. A. HUNT, Mrs. J. KING, T. MANSHIP, B. A. E. MARR, Mrs. I. MCCULLOCH, Dr. AMICIA MELLAND, Mr. and Mrs. R. NEWMAN, J. OSBORNE, Mrs. MONIQUE PARKER, Mrs. E. PEAL, Mrs. R. C. PRICE, Miss K. ROSS, K. D. SHAW, I. TEMPLETON, Mr. and Mrs D. TOMLINSON and D. M. WILSON.

Mr. T. M. Gullick gave an address on "Birds in Central Spain". He described the major physical features and vegetation in an area from Madrid to the Guadalquivir and extending westward to Caceres and the birds to be found there. He dealt with avian population changes in the area and related them to changes and numbers in the rest of Spain. This talk, of great interest, was followed by a number of questions and by discussion.

A *Pyrenestes* from northwestern Tanzania

by S. N. Stuart

Received 24 April 1982

While visiting the National Museum of Kenya (NMK) in Nairobi in late September 1981, I found a skin of an unidentified seed-cracker, *Pyrenestes* (Estrildidae). It was collected by Mr I. H. Dillingham in Munene Forest, near Bukoba, West Lake Region, in northwestern Tanzania (1° 19' S, 31° 36' E), on 22 February 1962. Britton (1980) makes no mention of any *Pyrenestes* species occurring in this region of Tanzania. The specimen, sexed as a female, was not immediately identifiable, and was therefore loaned to the British Museum (BMNH) at Tring where I was able to compare it with specimens of *P. minor* and *P. ostrinus* (Table 1).

It is evident that both species show considerable variation in size and the subspecies are probably best considered polymorphisms rather than true subspecies. This is certainly true for *P. minor vincenti* (Traylor 1968). In *P. ostrinus* the subspecies are also somewhat artificial divisions of what is in fact a clinal variation in size. The subspecies of *P. minor* and *P. ostrinus* were defined by Chapin (1924) on morphometric criteria. He noted that the smallest-billed *Pyrenestes* were generally collected from continuous forests in areas of high rainfall, whereas the large-billed specimens often came from outlying gallery forests where, on the edges, there may be a restricted diet of hard seeds. Clearing of forests might have affected the distributions of large and small forms of both species, giving rise to the complex patterns seen today (see Hall & Moreau 1970). There is much sympatry between birds of

TABLE 1
Measurements (mm) of female *Pyrenestes minor* and *P. ostrinus*.
(Means are enclosed in brackets)

	Bill length	Bill depth	Bill width	Wing	Tarsus	Tail
			Bukoba specimen			
n=1	16.7	12.4	12.1	67.0	19.9	58.6
			<i>P. minor minor</i>			
n=4	15.5-17.0 (16.2)	10.4-12.1 (11.0)	9.5-11.5 (10.2)	59.0-61.0 (60.0)	18.2-19.3 (18.7)	55.3-64.9 (58.2)
			<i>P. minor vincenti</i>			
n=1	17.5	13.4	13.4	63.0	20.4	62.4
			<i>P. ostrinus rothschildi</i>			
n=8	16.2-18.5 (17.4)	11.5-12.9 (12.1)	11.7-12.9 (12.3)	61.0-65.0 (62.3)	18.0-20.2 (19.0)	47.4-55.1 (50.9)
			<i>P. ostrinus ostrinus</i>			
n=3	19.0-20.4 (19.7)	14.6-17.3 (16.4)	13.9-16.2 (15.1)	62.0-69.0 (66.0)	19.1-20.2 (19.8)	48.7-55.4 (52.6)
			<i>P. ostrinus frommi</i>			
n=1	23.5	19.3	18.1	70.0	22.1	56.9

different sizes in both *ostrinus* and *minor* (Traylor 1968). Consequently White (1963) does not recognise the various subspecies of *ostrinus* and *minor* based on size differences and, indeed, regards *ostrinus* and *minor* themselves as conspecific, uniting them also with *P. sanguineus*.

The Bukoba specimen appears to be closest to *P. o. rothschildi* (the smallest of the *ostrinus* forms) on all measurements, except for the long tail, which is more characteristic of *minor*. In colouration it is indistinguishable from female *ostrinus*. The red of the face extends to the nape and chest, unlike female *minor*. The dark olive belly, back and wings are also characteristic of *ostrinus*, the female *minor* being much paler.

On distributional grounds, the Bukoba specimen is more likely to be *ostrinus*, this species being recorded only 200 km to the north on the Sese Islands, in Lake Victoria, Uganda. The nearest localities for *minor* are some 900 km to the southeast. Mr Dillingham informs me that when he sent the specimen to the Nairobi Museum it was identified as a *Pyrenestes*, but with no specific identification. W. Hay (pers. comm. to I. H. Dillingham) has seen *Pyrenestes* on several occasions in Munene Forest, and also in the Rubeho Forest Reserve (1° 24' S, 31° 45' E), about 8 km south of Bukoba. Hay notes that all the birds he saw were brownish; birds with black bellies and backs, characteristic of the male *ostrinus*, were never seen. He therefore believed these Bukoba birds to be *minor*.

I suggest that for the time being the specimen collected by Dillingham at Bukoba be considered *ostrinus*, on the basis of both size and colouration. I draw attention, however, to the long tail of Dillingham's specimen (which is a *minor* characteristic) and to Hay's field observations. The matter cannot be resolved until a male specimen is collected from this area. It is possible that the Bukoba birds are intermediate between *ostrinus* and *minor*, lending support to White's (1963) treatment of *Pyrenestes* as one polytypic species.

Acknowledgements: Mr. G. R. Cunningham-van Someren kindly afforded me facilities at the NMK, as did Mr. I. C. J. Galbraith at the BMNH, Tring. Mr. Cunningham-van Someren also loaned the *Pyrenestes* specimens in Nairobi to the BMNH for my attention. I am grateful to Mr I. H. Dillingham for answering various questions and for contacting Mr W. Hay on my behalf. Mr C. W. Benson and Dick Watling made constructive comments on an earlier draft of this note.

References:

- Britton, P. L. (ed.) 1980. *Birds of East Africa*. EANHS: Nairobi.
 Chapin, J. P. 1924. Size-variation in *Pyrenestes*, a genus of weaver-finches. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 49: 415-441.
 Hall, B. P. & Moreau, R. E. 1970. *An Atlas of Speciation in African Passerine Birds*. British Museum (Nat. Hist.): London.
 Traylor, M. A. 1968. Genus *Pyrenestes*. In: *Checklist of Birds of the World*, Vol. 14 (ed. R. A. Paynter, Jr.): 318-321. Museum of Comparative Zoology: Cambridge, Massachusetts.
 White, C. M. N. 1963. *A Revised Check List of African Flycatchers*, etc. Department of Game and Fisheries: Lusaka.

Address: S. N. Stuart, Department of Applied Biology, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, CB2 3DX, U.K.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1983.

Range extensions of Colombian birds as indicated by the M. A. Carriker Jr. collection at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

S. L. Hilty and W. L. Brown

Received 26 June 1982

Melvin A. Carriker Jr. collected about 23,000 specimens in western Colombia between 1941 and 1953 for the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (USNM). Although the late Alexander Wetmore studied parts of this collection in conjunction with his work on the birds of Panama and published on some of the new subspecies and more significant distributional records contained therein, this important series of specimens has otherwise received little attention. As it contains a wealth of new range extensions and other distributional information, we have summarized this data here.

All the specimens in this collection (with data on breeding condition) are listed in Carriker's field journals, now bound in 3 volumes and housed at USNM. These greatly facilitated the plotting of distributional data. When we noted an extension of range for a particular species, the specimens were then checked in the museum collection to confirm the identification. We found noteworthy extensions of range for the 256 species detailed here, 86 of which are recorded for the first time from the Serranía (hereafter Snía.) de Perijá in Colombia. Two species are the first Colombian records:- the Perijá Thistletail *Schizoeaca perijana* and the migrant Blue Grosbeak *Guiraca caerulea*. The Blue Grosbeak record is also the first for South America.

Carriker's field journals were made available to R. A. Paynter, Jr., and thus geographic details for all 99 of his collecting stations for the USNM series may be found in the '*Ornithological Gazetteer of Colombia*' (R. A. Paynter, Jr. & M. A. Traylor Jr. 1981. *Mus. Comp. Zool. Harvard*). These stations were selected systematically by Carriker and provide information on the distribution in many areas where little was known previously. They are listed numerically in Table 1, along with their Department or political division and the appropriate page number from the *Gazetteer*. In the species list which then follows, these localities are designated by the number in this list, 2 or more often being quoted, especially where they "fill in" a large, formerly